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Identical letters dated 21 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I should like to draw your attention to the following information:

Today, Damascus was hit by a series of terrorist bombings, the most devastating of which occurred in Thawrah Street, on the outskirts of the Mazra'ah residential quarter. Preliminary estimates indicate that 53 civilians were killed and hundreds injured in the attack. The victims included children and students, some of whom are in critical condition. The terrorist bombing caused substantial damage to Hayat Hospital and its medical equipment and Abdullah bin Zubayr School, and burned many cars and other vehicles. At that same location, the competent authorities stopped a car that was carrying containers packed with tons of explosives, and arrested the would-be suicide bomber who was driving it.

Those attacks coincided with others in which mortar shells were fired at several residential buildings, causing material damage. Yesterday, the terrorist groups once again attacked Syria's athletes, firing two mortar shells at Tishrin Sports City. One shell struck Tishrin Stadium, while the other exploded near Tishrin Hotel, which is used for housing athletes. Football player Yusuf Sulayman was killed and several other players and staff were injured as they were preparing for a domestic league match.

These cowardly terrorist attacks, which targeted crowded residential areas and major intersections in the capital, Damascus, were the latest in a series of attacks that have taken place in Damascus and several Syrian governorates. They were carried out by armed terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaida that are receiving financial and logistical support and political and media cover from States in the region and outside it. The actions of those States are contrary to their obligations under international law and United Nations resolutions concerning counter-terrorism.

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The credibility of the counter-terrorism campaign, which has always been a concern of the international community and the focus of much effort on its part, is facing an unprecedented test. Terrorism in its most savage form is striking Syrian civilians, without mercy and indiscriminately, heedless of whether its victims are the elderly, children or students. In its previous letters addressed to the Security Council and the Secretary-General, Syria called on Member States to condemn strongly and unequivocally these savage terrorist crimes and to hold accountable and restrain those States that are supporting the terrorists, regardless of the form such support may take.

The Syrian Arab Republic hopes that, on this occasion, the Security Council will be able to take a resolute stance that affirms its commitment to countering terrorism, regardless of where or when it occurs. By condemning in clear terms this terrorist attack, the Security Council would send a stern message to the terrorist groups and those who support them that no double standards are applied with regard to terrorist crimes, regardless of where they are committed. Should the Council yet again overlook such an act of terrorism, it would confirm suspicions that it is not serious about countering terrorism and implementing its resolutions in that regard. That would also be construed as providing political cover for these terrorist crimes.

The credibility of the international community is at stake. Failure to condemn these acts of terrorism would be unjustifiable, from both a moral and humanitarian perspective, and would be tantamount to ignoring the suffering of the Syrian victims of terrorism and their families. It would only provide fresh evidence that double standards are part and parcel of the Council's approach to international terrorism, and would confirm once again the extent to which certain regional and international parties are complicit in the systematic terrorism that is being directed against the Syrian State and people.

Syria affirms that these terrorist murderers will not deter it from protecting its citizens. It will continue to fight terrorism, even as its implements its political programme to resolve the crisis, because this programme, which is based on dialogue among Syrians, is the best way of resolving the crisis.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 105, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative